

WILL BE ORDINARY

The Coming Out Dresses are Plain and Simple.

JANUARY STYLES IN GOWNS

Pretty Fashions for Pretty Girls—Beauty That Does Not Depend on "Great Iron" Dollars.

I have seen of late a number of evening dresses for young girls—coming out dresses I suppose I may call them—which are worth talking about for two reasons, one, because they are very pretty and, two, because they are simple enough to awaken a different kind of interest from the interest which is born of wonder.

The little white frock I begin with interests me most for a woman's reason: I am very deeply interested in its wearer, and the other gowns, even if equally delectable, are the gowns of strangers. It was made this week for the daughter of an artist, and the



IN WHITE BENGALINE.

artist's wife designed it and the girl herself stood up tall and young and straight in the studio while the painter father paced to and fro, his head on one side, considering the fall of the draperies. A little party was to be given in Laura's honor, and to all of us who loved Laura's soft brown hair and pink cheeks the cut and fit of Laura's gown were most important considerations.

A soft white camel's hair was the fabric we had decided upon after three mornings spent in consultation, and two more days brought us to an agreement as to the pattern: the simple waist—the mother's choice—with the pretty gathered tucker of white silk across the bosom, and the dainty bretelles, shoulder knots and belt of white ribbon. It showed her arms and her rounded neck and throat, yet was high for prudery, and the skirt was straight and untrimmed and just cleared the floor.

Laura's mother braided the heavy hair in the low knot behind her ears, but it was the artist father who broke two creamy roses from one of the bunches that had been sent her, and tucked them, one above and the other just below the coil.

My girl enjoyed the evening perhaps better because she knew her dress, that is, she said she had a very pleasant sense of acquaintance with it because she had had a hand in the stitching of every seam.

A dressmaker who reckons among her customers many women who dress well has upon her order books one or two other young girl's frocks that I had it in mind to describe. The white bengaline that is figured second is among these. Bengaline is a favorite material with young girls this winter—I am speaking now, mind you, of young girls who have to dress well at comparatively small cost; not of young girls who dress well on nothing, because evening dresses of any sort are not to be reckoned among life's first



LACE AND WHITE CAMEL.

necessities—because it possesses many of the advantages of poplin without its stiffness, while poplin in its turn possesses about all the advantages of silk without its tendency to wear shiny.

This white bengaline was cut after a fashion possible only to a slender figure, and even then, though pretty in its frank simplicity, probably not the most becoming, with a saquee bodice, gathered to the half-round neck, belted with lapping ribbons at the waist and falling just below the hips all around. For girlishness it had a circle of the new mossy chenille about the top of the bodice, quite as effective and acceptable as feather trimmings and much less costly. The short sleeves were nothing more than simple flaring plaits of the bengaline crossing the tops of the arms. White gloves, to come just above the elbows, and a white fan were laid out to go with this gown.

A little more elaborate but not necessarily much more expensive is the gown of which a back view has been pictured, so affording a little variety from the reign of fronts with insipid fashions which last season's library of fashion plates invariably treats the world feminine. This dress was brought from abroad to be worn by a pretty blonde who is making her

debut this season at a somewhat later age than is thought commonly for a debut, though this girl might almost be Helen Gould's twin, she and the daughter of the many times millionaire being both twenty-one and born in the same month and upon the same day. The twin whose father is not a money prince and who bought her Paris frock with money earned as a bookkeeper and private secretary, chose a silvery cashmere, hesitating between white and gray, and made with a French skirt finished at the bottom with three tiny ruffles of silvery velvet with rows of narrow gold galon run between. The ruffles are not more than two inches each in width, and the effect of the device is quaint and in this instance, at least, most piquant.

The skirt is cut, if any clever girl will venture on a duplication, of six straight widths, each seventeen and three-quarter inches wide. The half-low, pointed bodice is finished with a velvet ruffle at the waist gathered to a heading and with a thread of gold galon run below. The skirt is caught up under a rosette on the right side, and in the middle of the back the breadth is lifted and fastened above the narrowing frills whose meeting point is hidden beneath the bouffant puff of the odd drapery.

The bodice arrangement is the same back and front, a pointed vest of lace, outlined at the top with galon and with a gold spark flickering out down the middle. The sleeves, which reach the elbows, are three full puffs of lace gathered with galon.

I did not mean to include any extravagant or eccentric gowns in this disquisition, but from any description of young girls' dresses for the present winter it is hard to omit the "bud bodice," one or more of which may blossom and fade before your eyes at almost any gathering. A light silvery gauze over a very delicate pink faille was the chief constituent of a bud frock packed this week to be taken to Washington. It had a straight skirt, lightly draped, and a short directoire bodice with puffed sleeves. The gauze was of an open-meshed lattice variety, the network as it covered the bosom being taken to present the resemblance of a basket whose handles were silver ribbon bretelles, finished with great bows on the shoulders. Pink rosebuds



OF WHITE CAMEL'S HAIR.

peeped out everywhere through the lattice work, and a garland of roses was carried about the low neck, as if it crowned and toppled over the brim. Loops of silver ribbon fell below the waist and just under the garland at the bust, so as to carry out the bud basket effect from beginning to end.

Young girls do not wear long dresses with propriety; their gowns should barely touch the floor behind. Their skirts should be made perfectly plain in front, but full enough behind to hang gracefully. It is most thoroughly in accord with the fashion of the hour to choose fabrics wide enough to be made with only one seam and that behind. Slippers and gloves are chosen carefully to match the color of the dress. The tan tints that ruled so long with toilets of any and every description are now hardly seen; blue gloves, green gloves or even pink gloves are accepted by foolish folk fashionable in preference. With long sleeves two-buttoned gloves are the best form, but with elbow sleeves the world of drills and furbelows still smiles on monsignatures.

It gives one a sense of passing to something tangible and substantial to turn from crepes and gauzes to the muffling furs that bid defiance to January out of doors. Last year at this season every other woman stalked along, stiff, ungraceful and most uncomfortable, buried to her ears in a tall, black collar. This winter, fortunately since it is a mild one but not, experience teaches, because it is a mild one, all the collars turn down. Soft beaver is the favorite fur with women who choose things at once of beauty and of moderate cost, or sleek black goatskin. Astrachan is not especially popular, but I see a good deal of mink and, of course, much royally beautiful and much hideous sable. There are few other furs which present such differences of quality. Fine sable is the finest fur known, but poor sable, which many women buy and pay good prices for, is a poor fur.

There's a wonderful amount of green everywhere. It has lasted over from the autumn. The grass is green under my window and so perhaps it is not surprising that one woman in every four wears a green gown. We pick up a good deal of what we call "art" in a desultory fashion in the winter classes, and so this one fancies green will "throw up" her coppery hair, or that one sagely nods her head as she thinks she gets an inkling of its value to her fair skin. Green coats appear upon the street, green hats give a verdant look to the theaters, while, if you call upon your best friend, nine chances out of ten you will find her receiving in a green tea gown.

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